

Coffman Condemns Democrat Attachment of “Hate Crimes” to Defense Bill
Lauds Inclusion of Key Provisions in Underlying Legislation

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO), Marine Corps combat veteran and member of the House Armed Services Committee, made the following statement today regarding his vote on H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Conference Report for Fiscal Year 2010:

“I voted against the NDAA final conference report because of the Democrats’ decision to attach a completely unrelated measure to our defense funding bill. The Senate-passed version of the “Hate Crimes” legislation placed in the final conference report will have chilling effects on religious freedoms and free speech. I strongly oppose including the measure in a bill that is designed to provide resources for our soldiers whose job it is to protect the very freedoms this provision will erode.”

“I firmly believe in the underlying bill and am proud that it includes provisions I have worked hard on during my time in Congress.”

Coffman also made the following remarks regarding provisions in the bill he personally championed:

Coffman on Rare Earth Metals:

“In addition to playing a key role in many of our nation’s defense systems, rare earth elements are vital to our ability to produce renewable energy. To help us gain a better understanding of these vital elements, I offered an amendment to the NDAA requiring the Department of Defense to undertake a study that examines issues that could affect the availability of these critical resources. I am pleased that my amendment was adopted, and that the final conference report

includes language on this critical national security issue."

Coffman on Piñon Canyon:

"During my time on the House Armed Services Committee I have passionately worked to ensure no additional restrictions are placed on the Department of the Army in relation to possible future expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) at Fort Carson, Colorado. The expansion of this training range is critical to meet the training requirements for Fort Carson. I requested that no language in the FY2010 NDAA hinder the Army's ability to train soldiers as they fight by providing them adequate training space at PCMS, and I am pleased that no restrictive language was included in the final conference report."

Coffman on Military Voting Provisions:

"Anybody who pays the slightest bit of attention to the issue of military voting knows that we have a significant problem. The provision included in this bill goes a long way toward fixing the current inadequacies in the system."

"The provision included in today's bill, among other improvements, removes the notarization requirement for military ballots where it is still in effect, and permits the submittal of a ballot application form by electronic means, including by fax and email. The inclusion of this provision takes an important step toward ensuring our troops are able to exercise their right to vote, wherever they may be stationed."

Coffman on Afghanistan Force Levels Reporting Provision:

"Earlier this year I introduced an amendment that has been included in today's bill giving the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan the ability to utilize a Federally Funded Research Development Center (FFRDC) to provide his command the analysis they need to determine the appropriate troop-levels and mix of units. With General McChrystal's recent report to the President, some analysis of troop levels has already been done, but there has been much political maneuvering surrounding it. We cannot afford to risk our troops in the field for political

posturing, so the inclusion of my amendment gives the opportunity to utilize a non-partisan FFRDC to gain a better understanding of necessary troop level requirements. Winning in war and taking care of our service members should always be our focus and I am proud to have championed this important provision."

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